

Amendments To the Claims:

Please amend the claims as shown.

1-6. (canceled)

7. (currently amended) A method for providing compatibility between new and old versions of a schema that are used for defining structures of object and/or data models, wherein such schemas ~~schemata~~ describe the data structures, each schema having a namespace, type names, and element names, the method comprising:

characterizing both an old version and a new version of a schema by assigning a version of each the schema to a first attribute of the schema, wherein

maintaining the namespace, type names, and element names of each version of the schema ~~are maintained independently of the version, wherein~~

allowing expansion of the types and elements are expanded while maintaining the respective type names or element names, and ~~wherein~~

accepting without change unexpanded types and elements present in the old version of the schema are accepted unchanged into the new version of the schema so that the new and the old schema versions are both upward compatible and downward compatible. schemata ~~characterized by a newer version from types and elements used in schemata characterized by an older version.~~

8. (currently amended) The method according to Claim 7, wherein a calendar date indicative of the new or old version can be assigned via a second attribute for each ~~to a version of the schema.~~

9. (currently amended) The method according to Claim 7, wherein the schemas ~~schemata~~ are described by an extensible markup language.

10. (currently amended) The method according to Claim 8, wherein the schemas ~~schemata~~ are described by an extensible markup language.

11. (currently amended) A system providing for downward compatibility between new and old versions for definition of data structures of object models and/or data models each organized according to a different version of a having at least one schema, for description of the structures, wherein

a first attribute ~~of~~ in each version of the a schema is provided for identification of the a version of the a relevant schema, wherein

a namespace used in each version of the schema and type names and element names used in each version of the schema are preserved regardless of the version, the system comprising:

a one or more mechanisms for expansion of the types and elements used in the old version, while preserving the respective type names or respectively the element names used in the old version, and for accepting without change into the new version unchanged acceptance of unexpanded types or elements used in the old version, the foregoing combination enabling the old version of the schema to interpret data structures of the new version of the schema, and thereby providing downward compatibility between the new and old versions. schemas having an older version into schemas having a newer version.

12. (currently amended) The system in accordance with Claim 11, wherein a calendar date is assigned via a second attribute to each a-version of the a schema.

13. (currently amended) The system in accordance with Claim 11, wherein the new and old versions of the schema schemata are described by an extensible markup language.

14. (currently amended) The system in accordance with Claim 12, wherein the new and old versions of the schema schemata are described by an extensible markup language.